

wire fences, must be used to balk prowling cats. As to the best means of dealing with the human foes of birds, these, as already said, are mainly left to the powers that be; but the formation of "bird-leagues," by members of the female sex who are willing to forego the ornamentation of their head-gear by the plumes of songsters, is strongly urged, as is the repression of the ordinary collector. Education, and the establishment of an annual "bird-day," are also regarded as important factors in the scheme.

The author has performed his task in a manner calculated to interest his readers, and his work should be acceptable to those on both sides of the Atlantic who love to hear bird-music around their homes. R. L.

*Der Ursprung der Kultur.* Von L. Frobenius. Bd. i. Der Ursprung der Afrikanischen Kulturen. Mit 26 Karten, 9 Tafeln, sowie ca. 240 Text illustrationen. Pp. xxxi + 368. (Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1898.)

THIS is the first volume of an ambitious work. The author proposes to seek out the Origin of Civilisation on what he considers to be a new plan. But in reality Mr. Frobenius can only work on the old lines; he can only compare one custom with another, and use the same old weak argument from analogy to prove connection between tribes who have similar customs: "er lehrt alte Weisheit als neue." ("Programm": p. xii.). He proclaims the virtues of his "new plan," however, in the very manner of the Teutonic *Gelehrte*: he considers himself to be laying the foundations of a new science (p. xiv.): "Was bedeuten alle Entbehrung und Entsagung, wenn sie auch noch so herb sein mögen, gegenüber dem grossen Glücke, schaffend und Schöpferisch bei der Gründung einer Wissenschaft teilnehmen zu können. Ich habe die bitteren Stunden und herben Übel nie so stark empfunden, wie die Freude über die Erfolge, das stolze Gefühl des selbstständigen Schöpfers. Und ich habe den herzlichen Wunsch, dass etwas von jener Spannkraft, die Müdigkeit und alle sonst vielleicht verzeihlichen und berechtigten Wünsche vergessen lässt, aus diesen Blättern dem Leser bemerkbar werden und in ihn übergehen möge." The italics are our own: we greatly fear that Mr. Frobenius, like so many of his "Fachgenossen," has no sense of humour. He does not forget to castigate his predecessors in ethnological study, some of whom are apparently prone to set fool's caps on their heads and give them out to be academical costume (p. ix.). The whole "Programm" which precedes the book is a typical product of what the author himself calls the "überhitzten Gelehrtenkopf" (p. ix.).

Apart from the rather ridiculous pretensions of its introduction, the book as a whole is useful enough as a series of essays on various phases of African ethnology, which are often very interesting, e.g. the chapter on building-styles (p. 194 ff.). They cannot, however, be said to prove much with regard to the origin of African civilisation, which is presumably what they are intended to do. The author's arguments in favour of his theory of the "Malayonigrish" origin of West African culture are interestingly put forward.

Absolutely nothing whatever is said about *Ancient Africa*: not a word with regard to the Zimbabwe ruins, which we had expected to find exhaustively discussed here: not a word about the wonderful civilisation of Egypt, with the earliest beginnings of which we have now, thanks to the energy of Prof. Petrie and Messrs. Quibell, De Morgan and Amélineau, been brought into close contact, and which appears more and more African in character the further we go back. Not a single comparison of the Zulu and Egyptian head-rests even, to take the instance which first comes to mind; but a curious misapprehension on p. 97, where Fig. 60 is described as a "Sceptermesser der Pharaonen," whatever that may be: the object in question is merely the well-

known and commonly-used Egyptian sword called *Khepesh* (on account of its resemblance to the shape of an animal's thigh, e.g. *khepesh*), which had nothing in particular to do with either Pharaohs or sceptres.

Of the illustrations, while the majority are good, some are certainly very bad, e.g. Plate iv. and Figs. 137, 139.

*The Amateur's Practical Garden Book.* ("The Garden Craft Series.") By C. E. Hunn and L. H. Bailey. Pp. vi + 250. (New York: The Macmillan Co.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1900.)

THE sub-title of this book very aptly indicates the nature of its contents, "The simplest directions for the growing of the commonest things about the house and garden."

The subjects dealt with are arranged alphabetically, beginning with *Abobra* and ending with *Zinnia*. It must not, however, be concluded that the book is merely a dictionary of plant names. It is much more.

Thus, under the heading "Annuals," we have an explanation of the term, the cultural details necessary for their proper growth, together with lists classified according to the colour of the flower, or the purpose the flowers have to serve.

The book is written for the climate of New York, but with the requisite modifications it is suitable for gardeners in this country also. It is severely practical, and principles, though perceptibly diffused, are not so much as mentioned.

*Man and his Ancestor: a Study in Evolution.* By Charles Morris. Pp. 238. (New York: The Macmillan Company. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1900.)

THE author has written this little book for the purpose of providing the intelligent person with a good and sufficient reason for the evolutionary faith that is in him. It is true that there is no book of a non-technical nature that quite covers the ground taken by the author, and it is only fair to him to state that he has filled this gap in a most creditable manner. It is obvious that many stages in the evolutionary history of man can only be guessed at by us, and that there is much room for discussion in these hypotheses as well as in the interpretation of accepted facts; but Mr. Morris is not aggressively dogmatic, nor has he striven to be sensational. There are, however, several statements to which exception can be taken in the chapter on the "Vestiges of Man's Ancestry." If Mr. Morris thinks the function of the thyroid is a "minor and obscure one," let him have his own excised and then he will know. Club foot is not generally regarded as a reversion to the anthropoid foot. Taking it all round, the book may be safely recommended to that class of readers for whom it was intended, and it may lead such to consult the recognised works on the various topics on which he touches. Owing to no references being given, inquirers will have to seek elsewhere for an introduction to the literature of human evolution. The author has not considered his little book worthy of an index.

*A First Geometry Book.* By J. G. Hamilton and F. Kettle. Pp. ii + 91. (London: Edward Arnold, 1900.)

THIS little book contains a series of elementary exercises in geometry based on the method of allowing the pupil to deduce as many principles as possible after, and from the results of, experiments or exercises dependent on them. The deductions are drawn from the pupil's own measurements of his drawings to scale of the usual geometrical figures. From this it will be understood that the book really consists of a series of graduated exercises which appear to be well chosen and arranged, and likely to prove suggestive to teachers and useful to students beginning their first studies of the subject.